

News Release

U of M Crookston Golden Eagle Football Program Gets Staffing, Scholarship Boost

*By Stephanie Helgeson, Krista Lemos on Tuesday, February 20, 2007*CROOKSTON, Minn. (February 20, 2007) – Investments in the Golden Eagle athletic program at the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) are taking shape this spring with the recruitment of additional coaches and an increase in scholarship dollars.

U of M, Crookston Athletic Director Stephanie Helgeson has outlined a plan for phased investments to ensure the campus is able to compete successfully at the NCAA Division II level as a member of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC).

The strategy calls for directing initial resources to strengthen staff, scholarships and operations in the football program by moving part-time football coach Steve Olson into a fulltime position and hiring separate offense and defense fulltime coaches for the program. Five additional football scholarships are also in hand this season, taking the campus to 15 overall.

"We have already received more than 50 applications for the coaching positions," said Helgeson, who is working to fill the positions by April 1, 2007. "There appears to be a lot of interest in joining the program as we expand, look to become more competitive and provide excellent student athlete experiences, both on and off the field."

"And increasing our scholarship base gives us more recruiting options allowing us to compete more effectively with other universities locally," Helgeson said. The Golden Eagle football program has already had numerous campus visits and signed a number of players, many from the region.

In January, the U of M, Crookston reaffirmed its commitment to competing at the Division II level as a member of the NSIC; and Chancellor Charles H. Casey committed to working with University officials to identify additional resources and outside fundraising opportunities to invest over a 3-year period.

Head football coach Shannon Stassen, who is recruiting his fifth class, says he's finding that the news is bringing talent to Crookston. "Student athletes are excited to be joining a program that is investing the resources over the long term to be competitive in the NSIC. This fact, combined with the opportunity to attend a fantastic university and graduate with a University of Minnesota degree is very compelling to students," Stassen said.

Other Golden Eagle athletic programs are also getting attention. The Crookston campus is hiring a head baseball/assistant sports information director, also with a April 1 start date, and has added an additional scholarship offering for both the men's and women's basketball program.

The Crookston campus currently sponsors 12 sports teams: football, men's and women's basketball, volleyball, women's soccer, hockey, baseball, softball, equine, men's and women's golf and women's tennis. The UMC Golden Eagles have been a member of the NSIC since 1999. Membership in the NSIC includes ten schools in five states: Bemidji State University, Concordia St. Paul, Northern State University, Wayne State College, Winona State University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Upper Iowa University, Southwest Minnesota State University and University of Mary. The Golden Eagle hockey team competes in the NCAA Division III Midwest Collegiate Hockey Association (MCHA) and the equestrian team competes in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA). Visit the Golden Eagles online at <http://athletics.UMCrookston.edu>.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) delivers more than 24 applied-science undergraduate degrees with 50 concentrations, including online degrees, in agriculture; arts, humanities and social sciences; business; math, science and technology; and natural resources. UMC is dedicated to helping students and the region aim higher, reach further and dream bigger dreams. To learn more, visitwww.UMCrookston.edu.

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